

Published: April 2012 in <http://cape.army.mil>

“First Casualties”



Lessons from Yusufiyah: Table of Contents

For all members of the Army Profession

<http://cape.army.mil>

“First Casualties”

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1. Checklist

- ☐ Recruit additional strong/respected leaders from your unit to be facilitators with your unit. (Recruit as many as the situation mandates)
- ☐ Watch the video and read the transcript prior to your facilitation.
- ☐ Review the additional resources.
- ☐ Review the “How to run your workshop” guidelines prior to facilitating.
- ☐ Think about a personal experience that relates to the scenario.
- ☐ Resource Prep:
 - Make copies of the video transcripts and facilitation questions as needed for each of your facilitators.
 - If you plan on showing video clips, test to make sure they work on the system in your designated training area.
 - Make sure you have a whiteboard with dry-erase markers.

2. Who's Who



Justin Watt was a Soldier with 1st Platoon, Bravo Company. He attended to some of the first casualties that his company experienced.

3. “First Casualties” Video Transcript: Justin Watt tells us how the first casualties of his deployment affected him



In 2005, Justin Watt deployed as an Infantry private to Iraq’s Triangle of Death, a notoriously violent region south of Baghdad.

“I remember I had gotten over the homesickness and I was sitting there and it was sunny. It was nice. It kinda reminded me of home like in Tucson (Arizona) in the wintertime. Like when the sun is out and everything is good; it’s like you’re warm and it’s not too hot. When you’re with your friends, it’s a good time. I remember sitting there and I was inside there of the top floor of TCP1 and I had been accepted by my squad and no one was messing around with me anymore. I was on Alpha team. I actually physically acknowledged, like five minutes before it happened, how today was a good day.

Then all of a sudden Barker starts yelling—he was on guard down in the Humvee—and he was like, ‘We have just been hit. We have casualties.’ Just like that, everything changed.

I ran, grabbed all my stuff, got my EFR bag and I jumped into the back of the Humvee. Once again, I was still pretty new to the whole combat thing. I remember feeling like I was under water. I got my stuff prepped and made a conscious decision that when I get out of the truck. I am going to keep my weapons slung across my back. My only goal is going to be to get to the casualties because I don’t know what’s happening. So I get down there and I don’t know, ‘Are we in a firefight, or whatever?’ No matter what, when this door opens—I’m in the back right passenger seat of this Humvee—when this door opens, I am going to run to the casualties and run them to cover if I have to.

I’ve got my tourniquet and my pressure dressing, and we’re going to get this taken care of. I’m going to go out here and do what I was trained to do. I got ready to open the door. The whole time I had my hand on the door. My adrenaline is going. We’re pulling up to the TCP and I’m not even going to look around. I’m going to open the door and let it be what it’s going to be and I’m going to go to the casualties. I could see the bodies because I had already opened the door.

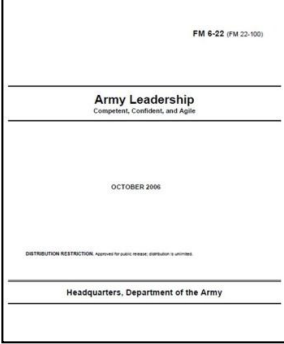

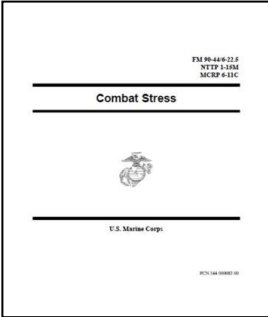
They were both laid out on the ground. I was like OK, I’ve got to get to them. Then I ran over and they’re not bleeding anymore. I couldn’t get a pulse. The only thing we could do is try to stabilize them, plug the wound, bandage them up, and then breathe for them and try and get a Medi-Vac.

I tried as hard as I could, but I couldn’t do anything. They both died—both the people I had worked on.

Everything was quiet and it was just so creepy. It was so profound because it’s like, that’s how you die. I hadn’t seen it before. You imagine that you’re going to get to say something. Like tell my wife I love her or whatever, but you don’t get to say anything. There’s no music. There’s no slow-motion camera pan. There’s no anything like that. You’re just here and now you’re not. And the world doesn’t care. The world kept on turning.”

4. Additional Resources

The following resources are available:

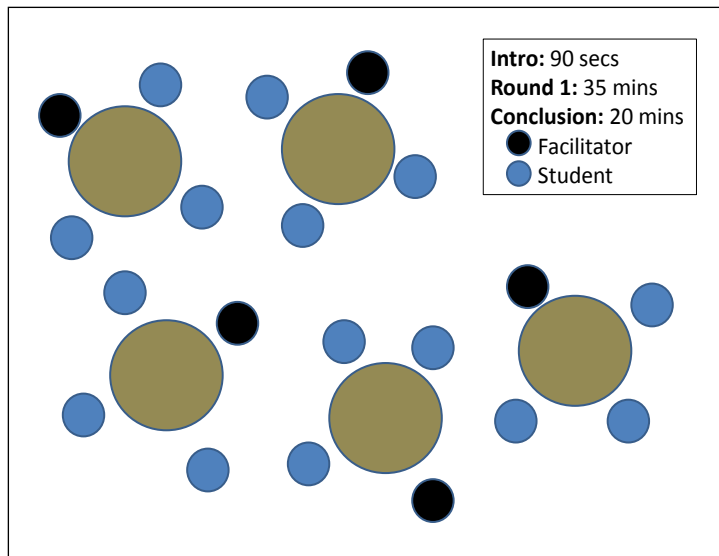
	<p><u>FM 6-22, Army Leadership</u></p> <p>4-42. Army leaders show a propensity to share experiences with the members of their organization. When planning and deciding, try to envision the impact on Soldiers and other subordinates. The ability to see something from another person's point of view, to identify with and enter into another person's feelings and emotions, enables the Army leader to better care for civilians, Soldiers, and their families.</p> <p>4-43. Competent and empathetic leaders take care of Soldiers by giving them the training, equipment and all the support they need to keep them alive in combat and accomplish the mission. During wartime and difficult operations, empathetic Army leaders share the hardships with their people to gauge if their plans and decisions are realistic. Competent and empathetic leaders also recognize the need to provide Soldiers and civilians with reasonable comforts and rest periods to maintain good morale and mission effectiveness. When a unit or organization suffers injuries or death, empathetic Army leaders can help ease the trauma and suffering in the organization to restore full readiness as quickly as possible.</p>
	<p><u>"Whistleblower denied clemency in killings case," Army Times</u></p> <p>By: Gene Johnson</p> <p>Article: http://www.armytimes.com/news/2012/04/ap-whistleblower-adam-winfield-denied-clemency-in-afghanistan-killings-case-041812/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Army Times reports on Watt's decision to 'blow the whistle.'
	<p><u>Anxiety (Fear of Death, Pain, and Injury)</u></p> <p>Fear of death, pain and injury causes anxiety reactions. After witnessing the loss of a comrade in combat, a Service member may lose self-confidence and feel overly vulnerable or incapable. The death of a buddy leads to serious loss of emotional support. Feelings of, "survivor guilt," are common. The survivors each brood silently, second-guessing what they think they might have done differently to prevent the loss. While the Service member feels glad he survived, he also feels guilty about having such feelings. Understanding support and open grieving shared within the unit can help alleviate this.</p>

5. How to run your workshop

The basic concept provided below is a way to facilitate this module. Modify as necessary to fit the needs and demographics of the group. We find that having a variety of ranks/leadership positions in each group increases perspective and maximizes takeaway.

PREP: Have a whiteboard and markers available. Bring copies of the video transcripts. Have a Facilitator Guide available for each facilitator. Get there early and set up the room in huddles large enough to support a variety of leadership at each table. Put chairs around one table (keep people close), rather than pulling several tables together.

BASIC CONCEPT: Meet for 55 minutes to discuss the module. The group breaks down into huddles large enough to support a variety of leadership at each table. For example, you want to have SLs, PSGs, PLs, and CDRs in the same huddle so you can maximize the overall effectiveness and increase the number of vantage points. Have one facilitator at each table to guide (NOT LEAD) the discussion. The workshop begins with facilitators asking the participants what their response was to the module. The facilitators' main role is to be a catalyst for conversation and learning about the topic at hand. This module includes two rounds of discussion, and ends with personal stories and vignettes that relate to the module.



KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- Let participants do most of the talking.
- The facilitators' key role is to ask questions that spark thought and conversation.
- Ensure you engage each level of leadership and everyone within your group. Do not let any one person dominate the conversation.
- Have questions prepped for each round to drive the conversation. (See "Detailed Plan" on page 5)
- You are a catalyst for conversation. Make sure that you continue to ask questions that make your group dig deeper.

6. Detailed plan for your workshop

INTRODUCTION (90 seconds)

Introduce the Workshop in a way that communicates the purpose of the event.

"Today we're going to look at the Army Profession and discuss the psychological effects that casualties can have on individuals and the unit."

ROUND 1 - (35 minutes): Discuss the psychological effects of casualties on individuals and the unit

[Watch "First Casualties"]

1. A) Who can relate to Watt? B) How have you worked through unexpected or violent death(s)?
2. Watt describes death. "You're just here and now you're not. And the world doesn't care. The world kept on turning." A) What did he mean? B) How will he, "make sense," of this experience?
3. Watt says, "I tried as hard as I could, but I couldn't do anything. They both died—both the people I had worked on." What was he feeling at that point?
4. If you were Watt's leader, what would you say to him when he returned from the mission?
5. Consider further how a leader handles death within a unit. How critical is it for a Soldier in Watt's situation to receive empathy from his/her leader? Explain.
6. The Profession of Arms is unique because of its unlimited liability and its, "killing and dying." How can you proactively prepare your Soldiers to deal with sudden death like this?
7. Watt says, "I'm going to go out here and do what I was trained to do." He describes the movement to the casualties' location. A) What does his description tell you about his character as a Soldier? B) About his leaders?
8. Consider the ADP 6-22 Leader Requirements Model. Consider Watt's actions in terms of A) Discipline? B) Confidence? C) Self-preparation?
9. How can leaders prepare their Soldiers to perform their tasks well during high-stress or high-casualty situations?
10. How might Watt's experiences with death on that day affect his perspective going forward?

6. Detailed plan for your workshop (continued)

11. What risks are now present for Watt and his fellow Soldiers, in terms of their behaviors?
12. What actions can the unit take to reinforce the resiliency of these Soldiers?

ROUND 2-Conclusion (20 minutes): Personal Vignettes and takeaways.

Facilitator asks students to share any personal vignettes and takeaways from the module.

It is important for the group to relate to this story on a personal level. Conclude the module emphasizing the psychological effects of casualties on individuals and the unit. Leaders should walk away with a better understanding of how to recognize the effects of casualties and how to assist the Soldiers in the unit when they experience casualties during a deployment.

Upon concluding, the following questions are useful for determining learning and promoting reflection:

Learning	Q - What did you learn from listening to the reactions and reflections of other leaders? Q - What are the future implications of this decision and or experience?
Reflection	Q - How do you feel/what do you think about what you learned? Q - What will you do with your new information? Q – How can you integrate new learning into your Command team philosophy, command structure and climate?